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## What's New?

### Technical Working Group Convenes to Support Teacher Incentive Fund Grantees

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) convened its first Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting on April 20, 2007, in Washington, D.C. Earlier this year, CECR partner organizations identified experts in alternative compensation strategies from research, policy, and practice and invited them to join the TWG. TWG members brought their individual and collective expertise to the April 20 meeting to advise CECR on its scope of work, including proposed technical assistance strategies, communication with Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees, and the development of materials for grantees and the larger public. TWG members unanimously supported TIF grantees and emphasized the importance of this pay-for-performance pilot program for the long-term success of alternative compensation strategies in states and districts. They also stressed that grantees need to share with education policymakers, parents, and communities the lessons learned from early TIF implementation. CECR is working diligently to ensure that TIF grantees and the general public have access to the most current information and resources on alternative compensation strategies through its future website. A list of CECR TWG members will be available at the CECR eRoom site.

## Hot Off the Press

**Teacher Performance Pay: A Review**—National Center on Performance Incentives, April 2007

[http://www.performanceincentives.org/ncpi\\_publications/PodgurskyandSpringer-TeacherPerformancePay.pdf](http://www.performanceincentives.org/ncpi_publications/PodgurskyandSpringer-TeacherPerformancePay.pdf)

*This report outlines the history of teacher pay in the United States and existing performance pay plans. The report discusses historical arguments for and against pay for performance and research relevant to the issues associated with pay-for-performance plans.*

**The Promises and Pitfalls of Alternative Teacher Compensation**

**Approaches**—Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice, April 2007

[http://www.greatlakescenter.org/docs/Policy\\_Briefs/Harris\\_Merit%20Pay.pdf](http://www.greatlakescenter.org/docs/Policy_Briefs/Harris_Merit%20Pay.pdf)

*This report considers alternative compensation systems in light of the shortcomings the authors identify in traditional teacher pay systems and identifies critical issues that policymakers must consider in devising alternative compensation systems.*

**Bloomberg Reaches Deal With Principals**—*The New York Times*, April 24, 2007

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/24/nyregion/24principals.html?ex=1335067200&en=592ce0f18b80d9a5&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss>

*New York City offers bonuses of up to \$25,000 per year to principals who work in high-need areas for three years.*

## Grantee Spotlight

The Guilford County Schools (GCS) Mission Possible program in North Carolina is designed to attract, retain, and reward high-performing teachers and principals in high-need schools. During the 2006–07 school year—the first year of the Mission Possible program—20 schools were funded for the implementation of the program. In fall 2006, the U.S. Department of Education provided an \$8 million Teacher Incentive Fund grant to expand GCS's Mission Possible program to include an additional seven schools in 2007–08.

### What are the goals of the GCS Mission Possible program?

GCS Mission Possible aims to reward teachers and principals who contribute to improvements in student achievement at underperforming schools. The district bases rewards to successful educators on value-added scores, school adequate yearly progress (AYP), and state standards.

## **What need is the GCS Mission Possible program seeking to address?**

Mission Possible targets teachers and principals in high-poverty areas. Guilford County qualifies as a high-need local education authority. Forty-eight percent of children in Guilford County receive free or reduced-price lunch, and more than 11,280 children between the ages of 5 and 17 live in poverty. Of the 112 schools in the GCS system, only 49 made AYP during the 2004–05 school year.

## **How much are the financial incentives, and how are they calculated for teachers and principals?**

The program rewards teachers in specific grade levels and subjects categories: Grades K–2 classroom teachers; Grades 3–8 mathematics, language arts, and reading teachers; and high school mathematics and English teachers. Principals from all elementary, middle, and high schools are also eligible. Eligible teachers are offered incentive packages—ranging from \$2,500 to \$14,000—in the following three areas:

- The program requires participating teachers to complete the following professional development and training activities: cooperative learning training, differentiated instruction training, mastery learning, teacher expectation and student achievement training, and anti racism training.
- The program awards recruitment and retention incentives to teachers based on grade level, subject area, and class size. For principals, the program bases bonuses on whether they lead elementary, middle, or high schools. These incentives range from \$2,500 to \$10,000.
- The program determines performance incentives using the value-added scores of teachers. Teachers having value-added scores of 1.0–1.49 years' growth receive bonuses of \$2,500. Teachers having value-added scores of 1.5 years' growth and more receive bonuses of \$4,000. Principals receive performance incentives based on their school meeting AYP and the North Carolina ABC standards. Principal performance bonuses range from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

## **What are the strengths of the GCS Mission Possible program?**

Mission Possible is a comprehensive teacher incentive plan that combines multiple components to keep and attract highly effective teachers and administrators for the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement in schools with critical needs. The Mission Possible teachers and administrators receive ongoing specialized training, extensive collaborative support, reduced class sizes, and recruitment incentives as well as become eligible for performance incentives. Mission Possible schools are professional learning communities with supportive leaders and collaborative work environments.

Mission Possible relies on multiple existing data systems that maintain value-added data on teachers and schools as well as data sources that retain information on student demographics and testing results.

More information regarding the GCS Mission Possible program is available on the GCS website at <http://www.gcsnc.com/>.

## Contact Us

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The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) was awarded to Westat—in partnership with Learning Point Associates, Synergy Enterprises Inc., Vanderbilt University, and the University of Wisconsin—by the U.S. Department of Education in October 2006.

The primary purpose of CECR is to support the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees with their implementation efforts through the provision of ongoing technical assistance and the development and dissemination of timely resources. CECR also is charged with raising national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation through this newsletter, a Web-based clearinghouse, and other outreach activities. We look forward to an exciting partnership with the TIF grantees as we embark together on blazing a new path for education reform.

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